

MARCH 1947

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Theatre World

(Incorporating PLAY PICTORIAL and THE AMATEUR STAGE)

Editorial and Advertising Offices:

1 DORSET BUILDINGS
SALISBURY SQUARE, FLEET STREET
LONDON E.C.4 (Central 1555)

Subscription
13/6 per year
post free

Vol. XLIII
No. 266

Edited by Frances Stephens

March 1947

OUR apologies are due to readers for the lateness of this issue, which has been due to prevailing conditions following the fuel crisis cuts. We hope that the April number will appear on or about the correct publishing date, April 1st.

It was not to be expected that the West End theatres would pass unscathed through the crisis, and there have been some casualties, among them *Antony and Cleopatra* at the Piccadilly, the play featured this month, which finished its run on March 8th. It had been anticipated that this splendid revival would run on for some months yet, and in spite of the play's withdrawal we are glad to be able to include a pictorial record of what was a notable theatrical event.

The finances of London's theatres are so delicately poised in these days that the enforced withdrawal of a matinee, for instance, is more than enough to prove disastrous. All things considered, it is remarkable that managements have pulled through as they have. In pre-war days a spell of warm summer weather, a period of royal mourning, or a slump on the stock exchange, was enough to dim the neons on Shaftesbury Avenue. The war taught the theatre how to hang on, but in all probability the critical days ahead will prove the biggest test of all.

Plays recently produced and not reviewed in this issue include: *Caviar to the General* (Whitehall); *The White Steed* (Embassy); *The Rossiters* (Lyric, Hammersmith); *Truant in Park Lane* (St. James's); *The White Devil* (Duchess); *Now Barabbas* (Vaudeville); *Romany Love* (His Majesty's), and *Peace Comes to Peckham* (Princes); a truly heartening array in the face of life's current difficulties.

Over the Footlights

Vernon Sylvaine will have two new plays in London when *Quiet in the Forest* comes in during April after a provincial tour. His new domestic comedy, *The Anonymous Lovers*, opened at the Duke of Yorks on March 13th.

Following the run of *Antony and Cleopatra*, Tennent Plays Ltd., by arrangement with the British Council, will present at the Piccadilly Theatre Fay Compton and Jack Hawkins in a repertory season of two of the plays in which they recently toured the Continent, *Othello*, opening on March 19th, and *Candida*, opening on the following night. Clive Brook is to appear in and produce Molnar's comedy, *The Play's the Thing*, for the Company of Four.

As we go to press news comes that the Old Vic Company's production of *Richard II*, with Alec Guinness in the title role, will open at the New Theatre on April 23rd. The season will end on May 24th.

The programme of plays for the 1947 Season at Stratford-on-Avon is now published. The opening performance will be on April 5th (*Romeo and Juliet*), and *Twelfth Night* will be the Birthday Play on April 23rd.

Sir Ralph Richardson opened the delightful Exhibition of the Juvenile Drama ("Penny Plain: Twopence Coloured") at Heal's in Tottenham Court Road on Feb. 25th. The exhibition has been arranged by Mr. George Speaight, in association with Benjamin Pollock Ltd., and will remain open until April 3rd.

It seemed as if all London's theatrical celebrities were at the service at St. Paul's, Covent Garden, on February 27th, to celebrate the centenary of the birth of Ellen Terry. That greatest of actresses is not forgotten. F. S.

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New Shows of the Month

"Born Yesterday"—Garrick, Jan. 21.
 "Jane"—Aldwych, Jan. 29.
 "Galway Handicap"—Lyric, Hammersmith, Feb. 4.
 "Bailemos"—Sadler's Wells, Feb. 4.
 "The Three Cornered Hat"—Covent Garden, Feb. 6.
 "She Wanted a Cream Front Door"—Apollo, Feb. 6.
 "The Eagle Has Two Heads"—Haymarket, Feb. 12.
 "Back to Methuselah"—Arts, Feb. 18.
 "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs"—Coliseum, Feb. 20.
 "This Mortal Coil"—St. Martin's, Feb. 23.
 Variety—Palladium, Feb. 24.
 "Power Without Glory"—New Lindsey, Feb. 25.
 "La Boutique Fantasque"—Covent Garden, Feb. 27.

"Born Yesterday"

WHICHEVER way you look at it, this is one of the most entertaining American comedies to reach this side of late years, and one that would seem to have suffered little in the journey. This is undoubtedly due in large measure to Hartley Power and the altogether delightful Yolande Donlan, who are as shady a gangster and dumb blonde moll as these shores have seen for many a day—and liked.

Garson Kanin's comedy is set in a super-super Washington hotel suite, strange surroundings for Harry Brock, illiterate junkman de luxe, whose doubtful dealings have brought him a mint of money, and Billie Dawn, ex-chorus girl friend, who, though decidedly decorative, is emphatically dumb (but not that dumb, for she has collected a couple of nice mink coats en route). Harry's first act always on entering this modern temple of luxury is to take off his shoes, not as a mark of respect we gather, but because he likes it that way, and maybe because chasing elusive and influential senators round the streets of Washington is a warm job.

Harry's mistake was to introduce the girl friend to Paul Verrall, a journalist of earnest views. This young man's allotted task was to put some polish on Billie, who proved liable to embarrass the social occasion, but instead he opens her mind to the iniquities of Harry's anti-social activities and in a lightning space of time whets her appetite for Culture with a capital C. Billie's vocabulary previously was as good as non-existent, so it was small wonder her metamorphosis was marked by some prize schoolgirl howlers. Harry's bewilderment can be imagined. He puts up a game fight, but his cultural ammunition is nil, and Billie, stumbling along with her new and half-baked ideas, though vulnerable, is more

than a match for him. Billie's conversion to "The Age of Reason" is apparently complete, for by curtain fall she has spiked Harry's guns and is content to walk out of his life on the arm of her prosletysing new young man with nary a thought for those two mink coats.

Yolande Donlan had no mean task to make Billie a plausible figure. She is delicious throughout, but most convincing in the early scenes. It is a sheer joy to watch her walking up and down the stairs, an irresistible picture of feminine vacuity and boredom. Hartley Power has never done anything better, and the odd thing is that this loud-mouthed, unscrupulous gangster becomes quite likeable in his hands. William Kemp is quietly convincing as the lofty-minded journalist, and Michael Balfour, Stanley Maxted, Launce Maraschal and Bessie Love are others who score in a very competent cast. F. S.

"Jane"

S. N. BEHRMAN'S adaptation of Somerset Maugham's story is better than no Maugham play at all. Indeed, Mr. Behrman has taken on the mantle to good effect, leading us from act to act with a sense of expectancy in the true Somerset Maugham manner.

For the most part this play is pure frivolity and we do not feel called upon to believe wholeheartedly in the characters and their odd matrimonial set-up. It is enough that Yvonne Arnaud appears as Jane, the dowdy widow from Liverpool, who blossoms forth into society at the instigation of a new husband young enough to be her son. Probably only Miss Arnaud with her irresistible accent and devastating insouciance could carry off this part. Ronald Squire—an interpolated Maughamesque playwright—provides the acid comments on life in general. Irene Browne is the playwright's ex-wife, Millicent, Charles Victor appears as Lord Frobisher, a Press Lord, and her old admirer, and Simon Lack as Gilbert, his nephew, the young architect who marries Jane. The ill-fated love affair between Ann Tower, Millicent's daughter (Ursula Howells) and Peter Shay (Jerome Hawk) is in the nature of a side issue, but provides the irrepressible Jane with an excuse for many complicated plots and counter plots.

Richard Bird has directed with his usual skill and the company have obviously entered into the spirit of a play which rests upon the effectiveness of its repartee. But the evening is Yvonne Arnaud's and it is difficult to imagine anyone else in the part, though most patently her name should have been Jeanne, not Jane. F. S.

"Galway Handicap"

MR. Walter Macken, in his comedy *Galway Handicap*, takes us once more into an Irish tenement house and introduces us to friends we have known and loved since the now distant day when Sean O'Casey first took us among them. It is remarkable how little they have changed. Either time stands still with them or Galway now is what Dublin was twenty years ago. The weaving of the strands of tragedy and farce, which O'Casey managed with astonishing dexterity but still not to the satisfaction of all beholders, is once again attempted but without success. *Galway Handicap* contains a thin slice of tragedy in the first act and a thick slice in the third; the rest is farce, but at times rather slow farce. The acting of Arthur Sinclair as an old stevedore with an injured leg and 11 children, living in a slum which he refuses to leave despite family pressure, is of a quality rare in the theatre, and we must be thankful for any play which provides opportunity for us to enjoy again all the richness of his vocal variations. In a bug-ridden and sentimentalised Joxer Daly part, Max Adrian works hard and well to keep the comic balloons drifting in the air and very effectively imposes a shadow of melancholy when the story demands this. Into a world of comic make-believe, Denis Carey has to bring a troubled figure burdened with grim reality and he achieves this with striking success, splitting the play into two parts.

H. G. M.

"She Wanted a Cream Front Door"

THIS new play by A. R. Whatmore proved to be an entertaining comedy, well-acted by Robertson Hare, Peter Haddon and Constance Lorne, who head the company. Mr. Haddon makes his reappearance in the West End after a lapse of years.

Considering the theme embraces collusive divorce and inevitably a hotel bedroom, there is little to offend. Mr. Hare, in a less hilarious part than usual, is nevertheless most appealing as Mr. Briggs, the little Londoner who is bent on giving his wife the usual grounds for a divorce. Miss Lorne is the domestic help who is much concerned in the getting of "evidence" as well as in the counter-plot at the hotel which reveals Mr. Briggs as a coming musical celebrity. Mr. Haddon, who finds himself almost entangled with Mrs. Briggs, is most amusing as a cricket-crazy knight.

Austin Melford has produced the play with skill and the supporting actors and actresses give a good account of themselves.

L. J.

"The Eagle Has Two Heads"

SINCE so much publicity attached to Eileen Herlie's performance in Ronald Duncan's adaptation of the Cocteau play,



John Vickers

HARTLEY POWER and YOLANDE DONLAN

as they appear in Laurence Olivier's presentation of Garson Kanin's *Born Yesterday*, the amusing American comedy which has settled down to a big success at the Garrick Theatre. Mr. Power and Miss Donlan have scored great personal triumphs.

it was a real test when this production transferred to the Haymarket. It is enough to say that Miss Herlie and the play have emerged in the West End with flying colours. In fact, the present version, with some changes in cast, and some obvious tightening up, is immeasurably more effective; a dramatic experience not to be missed.

Eileen Herlie's performance again dominates the scene, but a surprise was James Donald's current rendering of Stanilas, the peasant-poet lover of the Queen. At the Lyric, Hammersmith, Mr. Donald was not always at ease, particularly in the more impassioned portions, but now at the Haymarket his performance is immeasurably more compelling. This, naturally, has its good effect on Eileen Herlie, and their passages together are among the most moving to be seen in the West End.

There is still little to be said about this Ruritanian story of a beautiful young queen-recluse, mourning her husband murdered ten years before, and finding reawakening in her love for the young peasant who comes to assassinate her. There are hints of Court intrigue and high strategy but they are mere shadows of the real thing. The play must stand or fall by its atmosphere and that atmosphere stands or falls by the performance of the leading character. At the Haymarket the atmosphere is, if anything, intensified: the Queen's long soliloquy even more absorbing



Portrait by Baron

LEONIDE MASSINE

whose appearance this season at Covent Garden has been a major event in English ballet, first appeared in London in 1914. He became chief choreographer to Diaghileff in succession to Fokine in 1915, and both *The Three Cornered Hat* and *La Boutique Fantasque* belong to the period of his association with Diaghileff, which ended in 1921. Massine produced the dances for a number of Cochran shows, including *Helen* and *The Miracle*, and last appeared at Covent Garden with the de Basil Ballet Russes in 1934.

and the mental conflict between the Queen and her lover only now takes on its true perspective.

The new members of the cast, Cicely Paget-Bowman as Edith de Berg, Raymond Jaquarollo as The Duke of Willenstein, Webber Alexander as Tony and David Read as Baron Foehn, acquit themselves well, though the latter lacked something of the sinister qualities demanded of an intriguing Chief of Police. F. S.

"Back to Methuselah"

IF the writings of Mr. Shaw are as important as his reputation implies, his major works should be much oftener performed. It is a long time since *Back to Methuselah* has been seen in London. While the opportunity of filling a gap in education exists, everyone who wishes to possess an average knowledge of the Shavian canon should thankfully accept one of the three or four different ways of seeing the complete play (5 parts) ingeniously provided by the Arts Theatre Club. The inordinate length of *Back to Methuselah* and its lack of action are doubtless reasons why it is so seldom performed. The wonder that actors can memorize their parts is only lessened by

recognition of their marvellous logical coherence. If the actors read from their books, the audience's pleasure and mental stimulation would probably be as great as that now provided by their feats of memory.

In Part 1, where the conversations in Eden turn already on the burden of living and the unpleasant alternatives of Death or Everlasting Life, performance serves but to demonstrate that the ablest thinker can do no more than supply the thoughts of his own day to animate whatever is contained in the Past. Adam and Eve inevitably seem undressed, rather than in a state of Nature. As always, the Serpent is the outstanding success of the scene. Vivienne Bennett, in a beautiful costume and alluring make-up, moves and speaks with exquisite subtlety. The conversations in Mesopotamia, which comprise the second act, seem larded with Biblical quotations, whose very aptness proclaims artifice. Joan Haythorne makes Eve dominate the stage in the Second Act, as she should.

In Part 2, *The Gospel of the Brothers Barnabas*, the Gospel message is delivered in the opening lines as soon as the curtain is up. Then for 90 minutes half a dozen characters conversationally frisk and curvet round it. The message is the need for longer human life and the preachers optimistically deduce the probability of an extension because they believe it to be necessary. To demonstrate that at present Life is too short to be taken seriously, well-remembered Prime Ministers serve very well indeed. More sustained and delicious Aristophanic guying of prominent public men has surely never taken place upon the English stage. Most of the scoring lines are given to Lubin, and Godfrey Kenton delivers them happily and with point. Adrian Cairns preaches the Gospel with compelling dignity.

The prolonged Table Talk in Part 3, *The Thing Happens*, falls mostly to Godfrey Kenton again, now the undignified, easy-going, pleasure-loving President of the British Isles, and to Michael Gwynn and Frances Rowe, who are as impressive as long-livers as they were comic in their earlier youthful roles. This may not be dramatic, but it is stimulating. H. G. M.

The fourth and fifth plays in the Arts Theatre's most successful rendering of Shaw's *BACK TO METHUSELAH* were produced too late for review in this issue, but will be included in our next. The very effective costumes and the settings for this ambitious series are by Fanny Taylor and Michael Warre, and the production—no easy task—is by Noel Willman.

"Snow White and the 7 Dwarfs"

WAS it ill-luck or ill-judgment that brought this stage adaptation to the vastness of London's Coliseum in

February blizzard which had most effectively nipped any lingering Christmas spirit? Certainly, the dwarfs are chubby and charming, there is a ballet to help out, Bruce Carfax is a Prince in good voice, and Betty Shaw a beautiful and quite accomplished Snow White. But it asks too much of a young girl to fill a large stage with entertainment acceptable to an adult West End audience when dialogue and speech are trite and artificial. Long and dull patches emphasised that in such stories the screen has infinite advantages over the stage; the camera can capture forest scene and elf and animal in a manner denied to scene shifter and ballet dancer. This is not to decry Nora Chapman's Panda, a creature of personality.

F. J. D.

"This Mortal Coil"

THE Under Thirty Theatre Group can congratulate themselves on their first presentation at St. Martin's Theatre last month. The Club has been formed to give young theatrical personnel a chance to have their work seen by critics and managers. They rose admirably to the occasion.

Courageously they threw aside any prospect of an easy triumph by tackling a study of adolescence and mother-fixation — *This Mortal Coil*, a new play by Edward Rutherford. For two acts this proved, in their competent hands, a most sincere and moving drama. It was entirely due to the grip the cast retained on the play that an over-drawn third act did not jar.

One cannot avoid picking out for special mention the performances of Frances More as Sarah Atwill, and Oscar Quitak (of the Old Vic Theatre Company) as her son. But the fact that, in a production planned to be seen by "talent spotters" no actor attempted to overplay his part, speaks highly for the skill and integrity of the supporting players — Vivienne Merchant, Michael Green, John Barron, Ian Russell, Shirley Bagrit and Patrick Jordan. Production was by Karis Mond and the author.

D. R. M.

Variety at the Palladium

PENETRATION of the British music hall by America has been progressing steadily. Evidence will be found in the current bill at the Palladium, but with such artistes as Hal Stone and Nina Kaye there can be no dispute on quality. The High-towers, also, can give a most acceptable interpretation of dancing. There is George Formby to clinch his British hold on the mass, with Billy Russell to demonstrate that the working classes and the music hall are natives to the territory. It may be the Squadronaires are too strident as a dance orchestra for some tastes. There is the usual variety of jugglers and acrobats in a well-balanced music hall programme, as this year of grace understands the term. F. J. D.

"The Three Cornered Hat"

"La Boutique Fantasque"

"Bailemos"

MASSINE came again to Covent Garden to electrify audience and dancers alike. Never did London appreciate more the colour, verve and *joie de vivre* which came tumbling over the footlights as if from another planet. Probably *The Three Cornered Hat* and *La Boutique Fantasque* do, in fact, belong to another world: we live too near to things to realise how the emphasis of life has shifted in these past few decades. Humanity has had some earth-shaking jolts and the new mood of cynicism, near despair and self-analysis which has crept into modern ballet is in grave danger of blinding us as audiences to one of the fundamental purposes of dance as an art, which is to lift the senses above reason, to send the blood racing through the veins, to satisfy at once on the spiritual and physical planes with a blend of harmonious rhythmic and faëry. There is nothing tangible in this, nothing to be analysed; it just is, like any other absolute-value in a complex universe.

Of the two, *The Three Cornered Hat* emerged as the more successful revival, demonstrating to the full that under the inspired leadership of a choreographer and dancer as vital as Massine, the Company is capable of unexpected vigour and attack. Once again one was lost in admiration of the easy harmony of music, dance and decor. The Picasso setting is surely among the most effective ever seen on a stage; the economy of line, which in a few bold strokes suggests village, river and bridge, a fine background for the colourful and elaborate costumes. Massine as the Miller danced with more restraint than in former years, but conveyed a sense of immense power held in check: the years sit lightly upon him. Margot Fonteyn brought gaiety and mischievous charm to the arduous role of the Miller's Wife, and the rest of the company gave ample evidence that they had entered fully and effectively into the spirit of Alarcon's fable, particularly in the riotous "jota" with which the ballet ends.

La Boutique, fairy tale of dolls come to life, was also well within the range of the company, though the unfortunate last-minute illness of Margot Fonteyn and Beryl Grey was bound to affect the finish of the production. Moira Shearer stepped in to partner Massine as the Can-Can Dancer, and scored a personal triumph. She danced with a new ease, particularly of arm movements, and a real warmth of feeling for the character of the doll who was nearly parted from her lover. Massine himself, whose clever partnering must have been a great inspiration to Moira Shearer, danced very little, but one will not easily forget the air of pathos conveyed by his whitened face and the beauty of his hand movement

as he stroked the hair of his love. Big surprise was Alexis Rassiné's brilliantly funny portrayal of *The Snob*, a revelation of a latent power of mimicry. Michael Somes' Cossack Chief also was outstanding.

At Sadler's Wells Theatre, a new Celia Franca ballet, *Bailemos* (Spanish for "Let us Dance"), was recently included in the repertoire. This lacks the depth and colour of Miss Franca's *Khadra*, but nevertheless is most appealing in an unpretentious way, revealing once again a sense of style and a welcome gaiety and virility. The earlier dances of peasants and nobles are the most effective; later, when the groups intermingle, the clear cut pattern is lost. Solo dances of Celia Franca and Donald Britton were a high spot, and Honor Frost's white decor and black costumes very cleverly underlined the music from Massenet's *Le Cid* and the fact that, as a programme note indicates, neither music nor ballet is intended to be in the authentic Spanish style.

L. J.

"Power Without Glory"

AFTER its first night at the New Lindsey Theatre, *Power Without Glory* was snapped up for West End production. It has everything to qualify it for success.

The author, Mr. M. C. Hutton, is no mean playwright; the tense plot and succession of gripping situations are certainly the right meat for a London theatre public.

Yet I felt, after the opening scene, that here was the man to dramatise the petty humours and tragedies of post war everyday life. And I was disappointed when *Power Without Glory* did not develop this theme, but turned instead for its plot to the more theatrical study of the effects of a sordid murder by the weak younger son of a working family. I would still back Mr. Hutton to write the modern counterpart of *Love On The Dole*. I hope he will.

The superb cast—the adjective is mine this time — consisted of Beatrice Varley, Maureen Pook, Mary Horn, Trevor Ward, Dandy Nichols, Kenneth More and—an outstanding newcomer who played the young murderer—Dirk Bogarde. Chloe Gibson directed.

D. R. M.

"The White Devil"

AS mentioned in a previous issue, Robert Helpmann has undertaken the artistic direction with producer Michael Benthall of the repertory of plays at the Duchess Theatre which opened with *The White Devil* on March 6th. *The White Devil* is by the Jacobean playwright, John Webster, and is a tragedy on similar lines to *The Duchess of Malfi*, which was a brilliant success at the Haymarket in 1945. Robert Helpmann appears as Flaminio and Margaret Rawlings as Vittoria Corombona. Others in the cast are Roderick Lovell, Martita Hunt, Hugh Griffith and Andrew Cruikshank. Paul Sheriff is responsible for the setting and Audrey Cruddas for the costumes.

The White Devil is to run for three months, at the end of which period Mr. Helpmann will return to the ballet, though he will continue to direct policy at the Duchess.

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rt I, showing (L. to R.):
old Diamond as Alexas,
ncy Nevinston as Charmian,
therine Blake as Iras, and
ob McLaughlin as Sooth-
sayer.

opatra : Now I see, I see,
n Fulvia's death how mine
eceived shall be.

opatra greets the news of
death of Antony's wife
h a characteristic outburst
of temperament.

lith Evans as Cleopatra
i Godfrey Tearle as
Antony).



PICTURES

BY

HOUSTON ROGERS

“Antony and Cleopatra”

AT THE PICCADILLY

● THIS production by Glen Byam Shaw was one of the most memorable revivals of Shakespeare's play London has seen. There was an economy of scene and speed in production which seemed to sweep away all complications of the plot and made us deeply aware, as the programme note says, that this “is not merely the passion of a middle-aged man and woman, it is a desperate love story played out regardless of all consequences, with the known world and its welfare at stake.” Edith Evans and Godfrey Tearle rose to great heights and the supporting company were uniformly good.



Cleopatra : Now I feed myself with most delicious poison.

After Antony's return to Rome *Cleopatra* is left disconsolate.



Menas : Cæsar and Lepidus are in the field, a mighty strength they carry.

Pompey, seeking to wrest power from Cæsar, hears first of the preparations of Lepidus and Cæsar and later that Antony has left Egypt to go to Rome. (Hugh Metcalfe as *Menas*, David Greene as *Sextus Pompeius*, and Michael Kent as *Menecrates*).



Antony : I learn, you take things ill which are not so : or being, concern you not.

Antony makes his peace with Cæsar and their reconciliation is complete when Antony marries Cæsar's sister, Octavia. (George Howe as *Lepidus*, Michael Goodliffe as *Octavius Cæsar*).

Messenger: He's married, madam.

Cleopatra: Rogue, thou hast lived too long.

When Cleopatra hears of Antony's marriage she is beside herself with rage. (Richard Warner as the Messenger, *left*, and Olaf Pooley as Mardian, *right*).



Pompey: Let me have your hand, I did not think, sir, to have met you here.

Antony and Cæsar bring Pompey to terms and it is arranged to celebrate the occasion on board Pompey's galley.



All: Come, thou monarch of the vine Plumpy Bachas, with pink eye. In thy fats our cares be drown'd. With thy grapes our hairs be crown'd.

The celebration on Pompey's ship develops into something like a drunken orgy, when Cæsar calls a halt and the revellers proceed unsteadily ashore.





Enobarbus : Will Cæsar weep?
Agrippa : He has a cloud in's face.

Antony and his wife prepare to leave Rome and Octavia takes a tender farewell of her brother.

(Mark Dignam as Agrippa, Anthony Quale as Enobarbus, and Helen Christie as Octavia).

(Below) :

Messenger : Madam, she was a widow.

Cleopatra : Widow : Charmian, hark.

Cleopatra, recovered from her rage following the news of Antony's marriage, questions the terrified messenger once again and has no difficulty in persuading herself that Octavia is no great rival after all.



Mæcenæ : Only the adulterous Antony, most large in his abomination, turns you off; and gives his potent regiment to a trull.

Octavia, unhappy victim of a renewed quarrel between Antony and Cæsar, returns to her brother, who convinces her that Antony thinks only of returning to Cleopatra.

Antony : O, whither hast thou led me, Egypt?

Cleopatra : O, my Lord. Forgive my fearful sails! I little thought you would have followed.

Back in Egypt Antony is persuaded to fight Cæsar by sea, a strategic error which brings disaster.

(Below) :

Antony : If that thy father live, let him repent. Thou wast not made his daughter.

Cæsar sends his messenger, Thyreus, to make terms with Cleopatra, but Antony causes him to be whipped, and, rousing himself, resolves to fight Cæsar again, this time on land.



Cleopatra : Lord of Lords! O infinite virtue, comest thou smiling from the world's great snare uncaught?

Antony returns triumphant to Cleopatra, after a victorious battle with Cæsar.





Enobarbus: Be witness to me, O thou blessed moon, when men revolted shall upon record bear hateful memory, poor Enobarbus did before thy face repent.

Enobarbus, who had deserted Antony and gone over to Cæsar at the time of Antony's first defeat, is overcome by remorse and dies with Antony's name on his lips.



Eros: Thus do I escape the sorrow of Antony's death.

Antony's victory over Cæsar was short-lived, and, blaming Cleopatra for this final disaster, he leaves her Court. Then when Mardian brings news that Cleopatra is dead — a trick on the Queen's part to bring her lover back to her—Antony demands of his young follower, Eros, that he will keep his promise and kill his master, but the boy turns the sword on himself.

(Philip Guard as Eros).



Antony: Bear me,
good friends, where
Cleopatra bides.
'Tis the last service
that I shall com-
mand you.

Cleopatra, fearing
how Antony might
take the news of
her death, sends
her messengers to
tell him the truth,
but they come too
late. Inspired by
Eros' example,
Antony has found
the courage to
throw himself on
his own sword,
and he begs to be
carried to the
Queen.



Cleopatra: It were
for me to throw my
sceptre at the in-
jurious gods; to tell
them that this world
did equal theirs,
till they had stol'n
our jewel.

The dying Antony
is lifted beside
Cleopatra on the
Monument.



Proculeius : Hold, worthy lady, hold! Do not yourself such wrong, who are in this relieved, but not betray'd.

Cæsar sends Proculeius to Cleopatra, but the proud Queen will not treat with her conqueror and is prevented from taking her life by Proculeius, who is anxious to be her friend.

(Richard Warner as Proculeius).



Cleopatra : Sir, the gods will have it thus; my master and my lord I must obey.

Cleopatra makes humble obeisance to Cæsar, but her plans are laid and by a ruse a Clown smuggles a basket of asps to her room so that the Queen and her faithful women, Charmian and Iras, shall find a way out of their humility.

Cleopatra : Peace, Peace! Dost thou not see my baby at my breast, that sucks the nurse asleep?

The death of Cleopatra. A moment towards the end of the play.



Whispers from the Wings

By
LOOKER ON

AN Irish accent can cast so potent a spell over an audience that Sara Allgood could draw many of us to a mere reading of a random page in the telephone directory. Micheal MacLiammoir, fully aware of the enchantment of a brogue, brought over his own Dublin Gate Theatre Company for the London premiere of his play, *Ill Met By Moonlight*, at the Vaudeville.

"In my opinion," confided Mr. MacLiammoir, "plays reflecting Irish life are only possible when performed by Irish actors, as English and Irish rhythms of speech are so different. An Irish accent is subtle and very difficult to capture. English actors playing Irish character parts over here sound quite convincing to their own countrymen, but they could never deceive an Irish audience for two minutes. Irish actors have the same difficulty with the English language, not so much in the classics, as in plays depicting everyday English life.

"Dramatists of the two countries naturally adopt a different style. Noel Coward, for instance, writes in a staccato manner, whereas Irish dramatists, such as Sheridan and Wilde, express themselves in a more flowing rhythm. Both require entirely different treatment by the actor. The Irish brogue has charmed millions with its novel and amusing accent, but it has much to answer for. It is so easy for an actor to cover up a poor performance if he can project an authentic accent in any language. The accent rings true; if it has the advantage of being attractive, the audience is more than half-won.

"Tragedy is more popular with Irish playgoers than comedy. Tragedy, after all, is universal, but comedy demands a certain knowledge of local conditions. One has to get into the rhythm of English life before one can fully enjoy English comedy. Whenever I visit England it takes me about a month before I feel capable of appreciating *Punch*. In Ireland Shakespeare's tragedies are always preferred; in England it seems to me that the comedies have a wider appeal, unless one of the tragedies can be revived for Gielgud or Olivier.

"As a country, Ireland is more dramatically inclined than either Scotland or Wales. In consequence, her life has been more vividly portrayed on the stage. Since the early 18th Century, when Ireland began to be English-speaking, comedy has been largely in the hands of Irish dramatists. Goldsmith, Sheridan, Farquhar, Congreve, Wilde and Shaw are six names to whom the English theatre owes a great deal, and they are all Irish.

"Ireland has done little or nothing for music in the theatre. Even as opera-goers



MICHEAL MacLIAMMOIR

director of the Dublin Gate Theatre Company,
author and actor.

they are more conservative than the English and don't stray far from *Madame Butterfly* and *Faust*. They have been poor and bedraggled for centuries, and such an existence hardly produces a musical comedy atmosphere. The gay operettas of Strauss were composed beneath the glittering chandeliers of Vienna, which found no counterpart in the flickering oil lamps of Dublin. The Irish don't see life in the framework of an operetta."

Mr. MacLiammoir, still in his forties, has had more theatrical experience than most actors of his years. In London, as a child, he made his first appearance on the stage in 1911, playing King Goldfish in *The Goldfish* at the Little, where Noel Coward was also making his debut as Prince Mussel. The Irish actor recalls Coward as "a grown-up little boy, who wore a bowler hat when he was ten." Tree engaged young MacLiammoir to play Oliver Twist, and he appeared in *Peter Pan* with Pauline Chase. Ballet became his great passion, even at that early age, when he saw Nijinsky over forty times.

Later in his career, with Hilton Edwards, he established the Dublin Gate Theatre, which is now nearly 20 years old, and boasts over 300 productions, ranging from Blake to Coward, with *Mourning Becomes Electra* as the most stubbornly popular success! Apart from having become a theatrical institution in Dublin, the company has paid visits to London and toured Egypt and the Balkans.

Robert Helpmann—Two Books by AUDREY WILLIAMSON



Robert Helpmann, David Paltenghi, and Pauline Clayden in a dramatic moment from *Miracle in the Gorbals*.

(Picture by Edward Mandinian.)

“**MIRACLE** in the Gorbals,” by Arnold L. Haskell (Albyn Press, 8/6) and “**Robert Helpmann**,” photographic studies by Gordon Anthony, with an introduction by Ninette de Valois (Home and Van Thal, 21/-), are two new books which provide a valuable record of certain of Helpmann’s work as choreographer, dancer and actor.

In selecting *Miracle in the Gorbals* for detailed analysis in a separate volume Mr. Haskell has shown an appreciation of this ballet’s importance in the contemporary ballet scene. He is judicious in his praise and shows a sound grasp, at once subtle and penetrating, of certain constructional aspects of the work and its place in the ballet tradition. “Only ballet-trained dancers could perform *Miracle in the Gorbals*,” writes Mr. Haskell, and he is right, in a reasoned analysis of dance-drama, to place the ballet in the Fokine tradition.

The truth is that dance plays as large a part as drama in Helpmann’s works: every movement springs from the reaction of a dancer, and the plasticity and flow of individual movement and groupings are part of a superb mechanism in which the dancer’s craft is transformed by the imagination of painter, dramatist and poet. Only in the ballets of Ninette de Valois—notably in *Job*—do we get so subtle and yet bold an inter-relation of choreographic and theatrical facets.

It is surprising that while recognising this in *Hamlet* and *Miracle in the Gorbals*, Mr. Haskell has failed to do so in the choreographically more complex *Adam Zero*, of which he makes the astonishing statement that “the dance medium is frequently lost sight of in the producer’s joy at some telling piece of stagecraft.” The truth is that *Adam Zero* is more directly linked up with

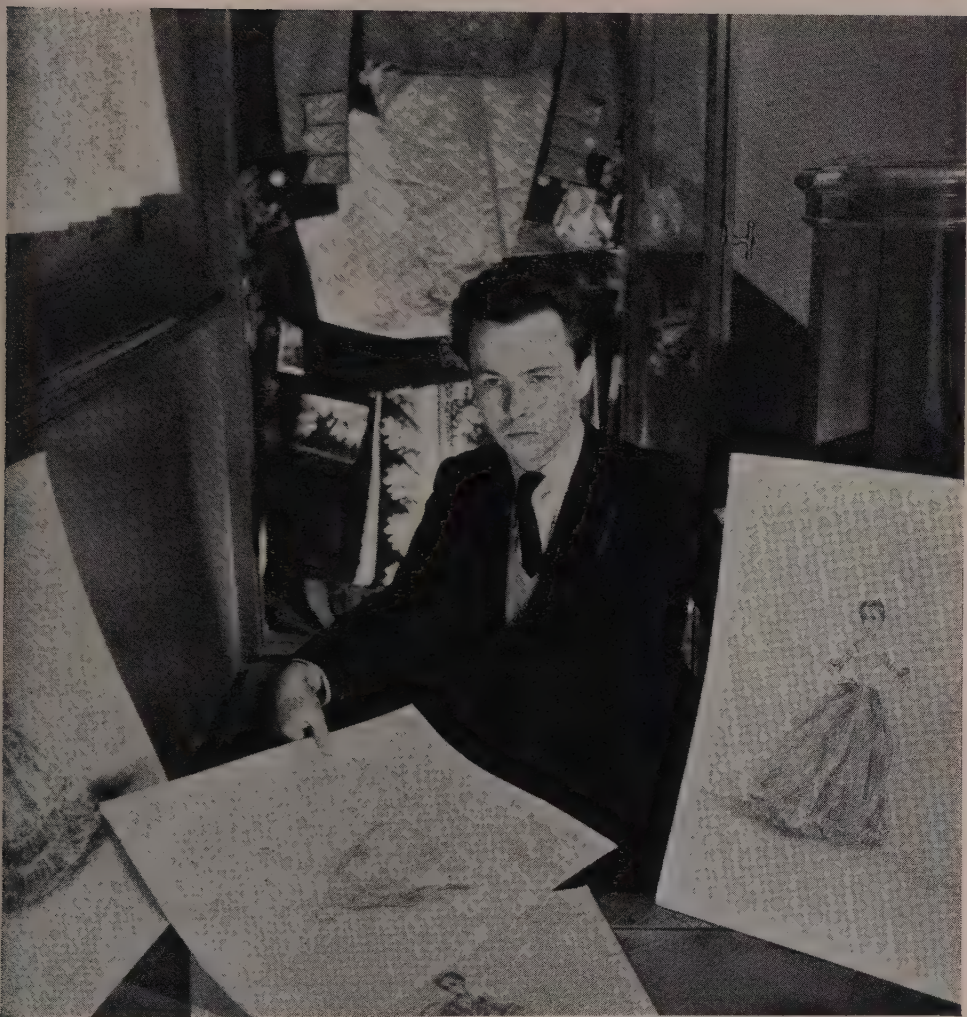
the dance than any of Helpmann’s previous ballets: the whole story grew from a symbolic parallel of man’s life with the creation of a ballet in the theatre, and different forms of dance are used to express the phases of his life and his place in time. The shifting but simple and expressionistic scenery was designed purely, with the aid of lighting, to carry the action forward swiftly, to provide a suggestive background and at the same time to throw the choreographic movement into relief. The originality (not the obtrusiveness) of the setting has betrayed some ballet-goers into overlooking the fact that *Adam Zero* actually contains more pure choreography of a wider stylistic range than any of Helpmann’s previous works. The “Marriage” scene, the “Classical” scene, the “Jazz” scene, the scene suggestive of a concentration camp and the “Death” scene are all conceived entirely in terms of dance, and the passages in which gesture and natural movement predominate are fewer than in either *Petrouchka* or *Miracle in the Gorbals*.

Adam Zero is a symbolistic dance-drama with characters which carry universal implications. *Miracle in the Gorbals* is the transcription of a poetic theme in terms of realistic life. Its scene is a real city, its characters living human types, but since the very nature of theatrical action—and particularly balletic action—is a convention, the realism is heightened by its translation into choreographic terms. There is nothing new about this—*The Rake’s Progress* and the opening scene of *Petrouchka* are equally realistic, although their setting in a previous period has blinded some people to this obvious fact. Mr. Haskell shows himself keenly alive to this balletic convention of “realism,” although it is difficult to understand why, having accepted it, he looks on *Miracle in the Gorbals*, owing to its contemporary social scene, as a ballet of “dangerous” tendencies. Hogarth’s *The Rake’s Progress* had equal sociological implication, nor has Miss Ninette de Valois attempted to conceal this. Why should the trend be legitimate in period costume but not in modern? Why must ballet deal only with life in the past?

Mr. Haskell is quick to see how the dance is to suggest that *Miracle in the Gorbals*—a ballet he obviously admires—is pure theatre and that the choreographer has “not the slightest interest in the slums and their moral effect.” No one who has discussed *Miracle in the Gorbals* seriously with Helpmann—as I have done many times since the scenario was first written—will accept this for one moment. No artist, indeed, could have produced a work on the slums of such sincerity and power without a very real basic capacity to “feel” its

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Brilliant New Young Stage Designer



PORTRAIT BY F. J. GOODMAN

James Bailey

● JAMES BAILEY, who last year scored such an outstanding success with his enchanting designs for a new production of *Giselle* at Covent Garden, recently stepped into the limelight again with his first designs for opera.

He is responsible for the entire sets and lovely costumes of Massenet's *Manon*, which opened at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, on January 30th. He brings into it that same romantic feeling that was such a marked feature of his first production, thus—at the age of 24—establishing himself as Britain's most outstanding young designer.

Considerable research was necessary to get details of costumes true to period. Mr. Bailey had only six weeks in which to cope with this enormous task.

Mr. Bailey, who is the son of Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick George Glyn and Lady Janet Bailey, of Lake House, Salisbury, is seen in this characteristic study holding some of his sketches for *Manon*.

Robert Helpmann—Two Books (Continued)

problems and be horrified and moved by certain of its aspects. This basic feeling Helpmann certainly has; but like all great theatre artists—Ibsen included—he is concerned primarily with the translation of his theme into "good theatre," only in the second place with its social application. The danger of *Miracle in the Gorbals* lies only in the fact that the type of theme might be attempted by others without this driving theatre sense and choreographic skill: but that is true also of every ballet ever created, on whatever a theme, and does not specifically apply to this ballet of modern life. We have all seen instances of disastrous attempts to create "another *Petrouchka*."

Mr. Haskell is quick to see how the dance tradition of the Gorbals district, only a generation or two removed from a vigorous national dance and now concentrated in the local "Palais," has given natural inspiration to the choreography. His description of the collaborative genius of the ballet is clear, though he slightly exaggerates the amount of guidance Helpmann actually gave the designer. Since this book, with its illustrations, will obviously remain the accepted record of the ballet one hopes, though, that in the next edition the author will revise a few errors in fact. These are as follows:—

(1) It is quite untrue that "it was Bliss who saw El Greco in the Gorbals and suggested a study of his hands and gestures." The idea of using El Greco paintings as the basis of certain groupings and gestures was entirely that of Helpmann.

(2) I doubt if any great ballet goes through "from rehearsal to production without a change," and *Miracle* was in fact rehearsed with an El Greco grouping as *finale*. The simpler, perhaps more dramatic ending, with only the figures of the Beggar and dead Stranger on the stage, was substituted at later rehearsals.

(3) In describing the Suicide as "a country girl," Mr. Haskell is reading his own interpretation into the part, not the choreographer's. Helpmann's intention was to show how the slums may produce this broken blossom no less than the obvious "tough." Similarly the street urchin is not "wholly evil," but a mental deficient warped by undernourishment and a child's instinct to copy his elders. Gordon Hamilton in his performance realised this admirably, in the choreographer's view.

(4) Mr. Haskell writes, "Benthall's scenario was worked out in full detail, his characters and their reactions clear from the very start." This is true as regards plot and to an extent the principal characters, but all the minor characters, including the Beggar, were created and built up by Helpmann as the production evolved in his mind. Adam Zero had a far more

detailed scenario, and in this case Benthall was responsible for all the characters.

Readers will notice that the page reproduced from Helpmann's rough notes shows Fonteyn marked as the Suicide, not Pauline Clayden who eventually played it so beautifully. It is an interesting fact that even before this Helpmann had planned the ballet with Fonteyn as the Prostitute and Celia Franca as the Suicide: an unexpected piece of casting which would obviously have given a rather different twist, psychologically, to the work. Through such small things does a conceived work change its atmosphere, if not its content, in creation.

Gordon Anthony's book of photographs is his best for some years, and a graphic and historically valuable record of Helpmann as actor, if only subsidiarily as dancer. The range of characterisation and expression is magnificent, and one would particularly mention the photographs of the artist in *The Haunted Ballroom*, *Hamlet* (ballet and play) and *Coppelia* as examples both of fine and imaginative photography and living facial expression. The *Comus* pictures are the poorest, missing the actor's finely-cut sensuous elegance, and *Dante Sonata* is a notable omission.

Ninette de Valois' introduction has a touch of critical but affectionate humour that fits both her own personality and that of her subject. The work of one who has a thorough grasp of her material, true knowledge augmented by intellect and experience, this short analysis is the most authoritative yet produced, and must stand as an estimate of Helpmann's place in contemporary ballet. The choreographer's own view that Helpmann's study of Satan in *Job*, more than that of any other dancer, has "caught the spirit of Blake, and the true outline, both plastically and musically, of the choreography" is specially valuable and conclusive.

Miss de Valois demolishes some legends built up by the amateur critic, and her study of his dancing should finally scotch the nonsense that Helpmann is not a good classical dancer. "Time and again a great dancer may be accused of having a poorer technical standard than a lesser star," writes Miss de Valois, but she lucidly differentiates between the virtuosity that lies only in spectacular execution and that fine correlation of talent and facility that results in dancing of the "perfection of detail" class. That Helpmann belongs to the latter style of executant no one who has seriously watched his dancing will deny, and Miss de Valois' phrase brilliantly sums up the basic beauty of classical execution, that fine accuracy and finish that tend to be missed by the average ballet "fan."

There is also succinct criticism of Helpmann's choreography and its place in the theatre, and of his tremendous gifts and

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In the News

(Left):

DIANA WYNYARD

who is acting for The Company of Four at the Lyric, Hammer-smith, in *The Rossiters*, a first play by Kenneth Hyde, in which Marjorie Fielding is also appearing. The production is in the hands of Alan Webb, the young actor, who is making his debut as a director, and Moira Verschoyle is responsible for the decor. Miss Wynyard's last appearance in London was in

Portrait in 'Black at the Piccadilly.

(Portrait by Houston Rogers).



DIANA CHURCHILL

who made a big hit in the gay role of Polly Eccles in The Company of Four's production of *Caste*, which, directed by Peter Ashmore, was recently at The Duke of York's Theatre.

(Portrait by Angus McBean).



CELIA FRANCA

as she appears at Sadler's Wells Theatre in *Bailemos*, the charming new ballet, of which she is choreographer.

(Portrait by Edward Mandinian).

Little Theatre Champion

By ERIC JOHNS



EUGENIE LEONTOVICH

A SINCERE compliment paid by a great artist is something to cherish. At least, that is how I felt when I received a note from Eugenie Leontovich which read: "Thanks for loving the theatre." It was encouraging to have my appreciation recognised by one whose love of the theatre knows no bounds. I doubt if any other actress lives so completely for it, with a passion growing more intense as the years pass by. There is no suggestion of that contempt sometimes bred by familiarity.

Born in Moscow, Leontovich became a member of the Moscow Art Theatre before the Revolution, after which she went to Paris and finally to New York. Her first great Broadway triumph was as Grusinskaya, the ageing ballerina of *Grand Hotel*. We saw her in London nearly twelve years ago as the unforgettable Archduchess Tatiana in *Tovarich*. Since then she has been no more than a glittering memory, as no trans-Atlantic negotiations contrived to engineer her return.

It took the New Lindsey Theatre in Notting Hill, the miniature playhouse that staged *Pick-Up Girl*, to bring Leontovich back to us. They invited her to come over and play General Tanya in *Caviar To The General*, which she herself has written in collaboration with George S. George. So great is this artist's love of the theatre that almost overnight she bade her husband, Gregory Ratoff, a hurried farewell in Hollywood and leapt into a plane which enabled her to catch the *Queen Elizabeth* by the skin of her teeth. She travelled 6,000 miles to play to a capacity audience of 180 people. Quite obviously she was not baited over here by four-figure contracts.

If the Lindsey management gave her the entire box-office proceeds at the end of the week it would not be a fortune. She has come to England because her love of the theatre is too great to resist an invitation to play to congenial audiences. The play may transfer to the West End, but for her, even a season in Notting Hill fully justifies the trip.

Leontovich has great faith in the so-called Little Theatres. That she chooses to play in one should raise their prestige all over the country. Maybe some of our own great actors will follow suit. As she rightly remarks, small theatres so often enable a play to become a living work of art, instead of a mere collection of printed words on the pages of a script lying in the manager's office. Public presentation in a small theatre is often possible, when production in a large West End theatre is out of the question on account of heavy overhead expenses. The smaller playhouses give authors a chance to be seen and judged in performance.

To actors these small theatres are a boon. It is often easier to get a job in the little theatres, which are constantly putting on new productions. They can afford to put on play after play, as long as they are not all rank failures. In consequence they are continually looking for actors willing to work for reasonable salaries. They offer beginners a chance to face the public before tackling larger parts in larger theatres. It gives them an opportunity to feel their stage legs. The American stage has benefited enormously from little theatres that have sprung up all over the United States, producing fresh young talent, as well as new ideas in production and acting technique.

As an artist, Leontovich has mellowed since her Moscow days. The fruit of her experience makes fascinating listening. "I never want to be a mere actress again," she will tell you. "In 1943, with Elena Miramova, I wrote *Dark Eyes*, which had a successful run at the Belasco in New York, and was bought for the movies at a quarter of a million dollars. More recently I collaborated with Mr. George on *Caviar To The General*. Actors who take their job seriously usually develop a desire to direct. Coward and Olivier are examples. It is so much more satisfying than being a mere impersonator of character. If you can write as well, as did Molière, so much the better. Experienced artists get a wonderful kick out of directing young talent, particularly in their own plays.

"I have one grudge against the present-day theatre in Western Europe and America. Insufficient time is devoted to

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Echoes from Broadway

BY OUR AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT E. MAWBY GREEN

THERE is nothing more exciting on the American stage than a first-rate musical. It seems much of the theatre's best talent lies in this field and with the form giving every department — composer, lyricist, designer, choreographer, etc.—its greatest scope for creative expression, the result can be truly memorable when a skilled director fuses these elements with imagination. This is by way of announcing the recent arrival of that most enchanting and unconventional musical fantasy, *Finian's Rainbow*, produced with courage, rare taste and a little less than \$200,000 by Lee Sabinson and William R. Katzell.

Blessed with a delightful, literate and really original book by E. Y. Harburg and Fred Saidy, the production is spiked generously with laughter running from the good old-fashioned Barry Fitzgerald type of Irish characterization to amusing fairy tale whimsy to social satire. Quite a combination you say, but so cleverly handled as to become an eminently satisfying mixture. Finian McLonergan, the Irishman (Albert Sharpe), "borrows" a pot of gold from Og, a Leprechaun (David Wayne), and comes to America, the southern State of Missitucky to be exact, with his daughter, Sharon (Ella Logan). His purpose is to bury the gold and watch it grow, for where else but in America does gold grow, or why else would the United States Government bury its gold at Fort Knox? Purely logical, you see. But this is magic gold and with it comes three wishes plus Og, trying to get the crock back to Ireland. One of the wishes turns the race-discriminating southern Senator Billboard Rawkins, a take-off of America's bigoted Senator Bilbo, black—a perfectly wonderful idea—another wish gives a dumb girl, Susan Mahoney, back her speech, and with the passing of the third wish, which brings about a happy ending for Sharon and her newly-found farmer husband, Woody Mahoney, Og becomes human and marries Susan.

The music to accompany this fable is by Burton Lane and the lyrics by Mr. Harburg and among others they have turned out a very lovely and haunting ballad for Miss Logan called "How are things in Glocca Morra?" which has the same quality that made July Garland's "Somewhere over the Rainbow" so popular, and two impish numbers that are irresistible in David Wayne's hands, "Something Sort of Grand-ish" and "When I'm not near the girl I love, I love the girl I'm near."

The choreography is fresh, inventive and



Ella Logan and Albert Sharpe in a scene from the new Broadway musical hit, *Finian's Rainbow*.

spirited as it should be under the guidance of the young and talented Michael Kidd. And Anita Alvarez, as the Dumb Girl, has one solo dance to the accompaniment of an off-stage harmonica, in which she runs off with the magic crock of gold that literally spellbinds the audience with its lyric loveliness. Add Jo Mielziner's great scenic gift to the production, Eleanor Goldsmith's costumes and put all in the knowing hands of Director Bretaigne Windust and New York has another memorable musical that can take its place alongside *Oklahoma!* and *Carousel*.

But if it took courage to produce the unconventional *Finian's Rainbow*, consider the daring of Dwight Deere Wiman and The Playwrights' Company in setting-up on Broadway the musical version of Elmer Rice's Pulitzer Prize play, *Street Scene*, which although billed as "a dramatic musical," is as near to conventional opera as the Hep Street of bright lights has yet come. With the Metropolitan Opera Company doing virtually nothing to foster native American opera, it is all to the credit of the musical comedy stage and a reflection of its vigorous life, that this brilliant opera should be seen in a Broadway show shop and be so tumultuously welcomed.

Mr. Rice's play makes the perfect book

(Continued overleaf)

Echoes from Broadway (Continued)

for an opera. It has been aptly described as a "tone poem" which captures the desperate longings of people caught in an ugly environment and of the few, simple, pleasures they manage to find amidst the squalor of their tenement section. And from this restlessness of these "trapped" people comes the melodramatic story of the cold husband and hard father, Frank Maurrant, who kills his affection-starved wife, Anna, and her lover, which gives the play its strong dramatic pull.

This is admirable material and composer, Kurt Weill, recognising its tremendous possibilities, accepted the challenge and set about writing the finest score of his career. "As soon as I began to think about the music for *Street Scene* I discovered that the play lent itself to a great variety of music, just as the streets of New York themselves embrace the music of many lands and many people. I had an opportunity to use different forms of musical expression, from popular songs to operatic ensembles, music of mood and dramatic music, music of young love, music of passion and death—and, over all, the music of a hot summer evening in New York." And so gay numbers that sing the praises of America's favourite dish, "Ice Cream," and that tell of a child's joy on receiving his public school graduation diploma, "Wrapped in a Ribbon and Tied in a Bow," find their place with such sardonic songs as "Lullaby," sung by two nursemaids, attracted by the scandal of the murder, who want to see the scene of the crime and the popular and low down "Moon-faced, Starry-eyed," sung and danced with amazing frankness and great skill by a tart and her boy friend of the moment. And on a more ambitious scale there is Mrs. Maurrant's moving aria, "Somehow I Never Could Believe," which expresses her frustration and disappointment in life, as she tells of her daily woes, and "A Boy Like You," which shows her deep maternal affection for her son, while "Remember That I Care" and "Don't Forget the Lilac Bush" are haunting love songs of the poignant and unhappy romance between the young law student, Sam, and Mrs. Maurrant's unfortunate daughter, Rose.

And if the book and score are so admir-

able so are the lyrics provided by the poet, Langston Hughes. They capture every mood and are simple and moving or clever and show wise as the occasion demands.

For the cast no praise can be too high. It is generally conceded that no show on Broadway has ever been better sung and on top of that every singer can act. Norman Cordon from the Met plays Mr. Maurrant, Anne Jeffreys of the movies, Rose, Brian Sullivan, Sam, and Polyna Stoska, making her Broadway debut as Mrs. Maurrant, is the town's newest sensation with her warm and brilliant soprano voice.

Several reviewers have no qualms about putting *Beggar's Holiday*, a new musical based on John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, with music by Duke Ellington and book and lyrics by John Latouche, in the same class with *Street Scene* and *Finian's Rainbow*. They find it "unusual," the score "exciting and hard-bitten" and the lyrics "brilliant." We fail to see it. The book becomes pathetically static and repetitious, telling as it does of three women who chase after the love of a low-life racketeer while he dodges the police; the Ellington score is a disappointment, containing not a single song that can be remembered, while Latouche's lyrics are incompatible to the music. On the credit side we can list only Alfred Drake's easy going performance in the title role, Avon Long and Marie Bryant's dancing and Oliver Smith's mordant and garish settings. Producers Perry Watkins and John R. Sheppard, jr., however, are receiving generous box office support for their offering.

Following up the success of *The Red Mill*, co-producer Paula Stone is reviving with her new husband, Michael Sloane, Victor Herbert's *Sweethearts*. Just as *The Red Mill* became a box office smash by the appearance of three wonderful comedians, *Sweethearts* promises to do the same, only this time by the appearance of one fabulous Bobby Clark. Mr. Clark's personal notices for his riotous brand of clowning are probably the best any performer has ever received and he can now boast of being tagged "the funniest man in America." Since *Sweethearts* has been comically cut to fit Mr. Clark down to his last inimitable gasp and gesture, there is little point left in saying this revival would be a desperately dull affair without him.

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Robert Helpmann—Two Books (Continued)

small failings as an artist. This is the "right" kind of criticism (and how rare in ballet that is!) because it recognises that the failings are those that go with great talent ("Mediocrity can never make such a descent") and that Helpmann's multitudinous interests, though they sometimes split his artistic allegiance, are the very stuff of his personality and his work in all branches of the theatre would have been less vital without them. She notes his "professionalism," as all who know him must, and that he has worked "devotedly, intelligently and remarkably rationally for anyone with so highly developed an ego." "He reached his height in the ballet world as a permanent member of a conservative institution"; and one would add that his loyalty to that institution (in thirteen years he has made scarcely half-a-dozen stage or film appearances apart from it, and then only for a brief period by special permission) has been the integral force so many modern dancers have lacked in the building up of a great career from great natural talent.

Miss Williamson, who is engaged in the writing of several books, will not be able to contribute reviews of ballet to THEATRE WORLD after this issue, but we hope to welcome her again to our pages in the future.

Books Received

Two additional books received too late for review in this issue were *The New Ballet: Kurt Jooss and his Work*, by A. V. Coton (Dennis Dobson Ltd., 35/- net), and *Dance We Must*, by Ted Shawn (Dennis Dobson Ltd., 12/6 net).

International Ballet

International Ballet began a six-weeks' season at the Adelphi Theatre on March 11th, with Nana Gollner and Paul Petroff as guest artistes. These world-famous dancers will share leading roles with Mona Inglesby and Jack Spurgeon, and the repertoire will include a new production of *Swan Lake* and also *La Bayadère* (Act IV), the latter a ballet rarely seen outside Russia.

Sadler's Wells Ballet

The Sleeping Beauty will be revived at Covent Garden on March 27th. At the moment of going to press news comes that Margot Fonteyn, who was unable to appear on the first night of *La Boutique Fantasque*, owing to an attack of influenza, is unlikely to be fit enough to dance again during March. The Second Company at Sadler's Wells Theatre are reviving Andrée Howard's *La Fête Etrange* on March 18th.

Owing to an oversight, the name of the author of the article, *The Theatre in the '40s*, which appeared in our last issue, was omitted. The contributor in question was Geo. J. S. King.

Little Theatre Champion (Continued)

rehearsal. A management decides to produce a certain play. Immediately they announce the date of the first night, normally a month hence. That means only four weeks can be devoted to rehearsal. The curtain has to go up on the first night, whether the play is in a fit condition to be seen by the public or not. To sell the playgoer an under-produced play is just as serious an offence as selling him under-baked bread. He is not getting value for money. The first night should not be announced until after rehearsals have started and the play has begun to take shape. At the Moscow Art Theatre they always rehearsed until the producer was satisfied that the production could not be improved upon. Then the first night was announced and the curtain was allowed to rise.

"I still retain unforgettable memories of the Moscow Art Theatre of my childhood. Most vivid of all is a production of *The Brothers Karamazov*, but as I think of that, other glorious recollections crowd in, of plays by Goldoni, Shakespeare, Gorki and Tolstoy. Shakespeare was always very popular in Czarist days. One of my earliest appearances on the stage was as Isabella in *Measure For Measure*. Wilde was very much in vogue, and at one time there were as many as forty different translations of some of his works. Actresses vied with each other to play his *Salomé*, which was extremely effective in Russian translation.

"Chekhov was always welcomed in person at the Moscow Art Theatre. Some of the older players, who had worked in the earlier productions of his plays, used to tell me how they hung on his lips for a few words of guidance. There is an intangible quality about certain of his characters. As, unlike Shaw, he offers few stage directions, players were more than anxious to meet him in the hope of gleaming a little light on the more obscure sequences of the plays. I still find that most of the laws laid down at the Moscow Art Theatre are uncannily right—particularly the one about unlimited rehearsal!

"I enjoy the experience of playing in my own play. It means I am no longer a slave to the author's lines. I feel the character, developing as I get more and more familiar with it during the run. The other night at the Lindsey I felt it would be dead-right, during a scene with my American rival, to spit out the words 'I hate you!' I took advantage of my privilege as an author and inserted the line on the spur of the moment. The effect was electrifying on my colleague and on the audience. I never want to be a mere actress again. It is far too limiting. The theatre has so much more to excite and interest those who write and produce as well."

(Caviar to the General has transferred to the Whitehall.)

Repertory on the Road

By MARY LOVE

A TRIBUTE TO THE ADELPHI PLAYERS

DURING the summer of 1946 the Adelphi Players toured Cornwall for five months (a record tour for this county) with a superb repertory of six plays. This fine little company, formed in 1941 by R. H. Ward, now tours in association with the Arts Council, and is directed by J. Boyd Brent. Since its foundation, the company has grown from seven players to sixteen. It is a co-operative company in every sense of the term, and no names are "starred" on the playbills, while every member of the company receives equal pay.

During the Cornish season, the company resided and rehearsed at Camborne, and save for a few nights spent in Bodmin, returned to the base each night after performances. Transport consists of a bus, two small cars and a van.

With only thirteen acting members, the company's choice of plays is limited, but, in accordance with the general policy of the Players, each production is of very high artistic value. Interchangeable scenery is used, which with small variations serves for all the plays, while the properties and costumes are of notably high quality.

The Cornish season opened with Shaw's *Arms and the Man* and Ibsen's *An Enemy*

three times, and the season ended triumphantly at Newquay, with an extra week in September. There, *Mr. Bolfray*, *Arms and the Man* and *Shadow and Substance* were given two performances each to packed houses.

In July, the company accomplished what is probably the most difficult feat of its career to date; the production under Maurice Browne of Raynal's *The Unknown Warrior*. Like *Mr. Bolfray*, this production required a fortnight's rest from touring, and almost the whole company assisted in perfecting the task. Scenery and properties are made on the spot by the Players.

The first performance of *The Unknown Warrior* took place at Camborne on July 30th under very trying stage conditions, and this play is probably the greatest artistic triumph yet achieved by the company. Revivals of two previous productions, *Ghosts* and Paul Vincent Carroll's *Shadow and Substance* were produced on tour, and the technical quality of both these plays gave further proof of the company's ability to do good work under difficulties.

The working hours of this gallant and enthusiastic company averages at least 14



The Adelphi Players. The entire company photographed at Newquay, 1946.

of the People, and in June James Bridie's *Mr. Bolfray* was added to the repertoire. The tour was arranged on a circuit principle, and as the selected towns were visited several times, audiences were always seeing new plays. St. Ives and Truro were the only towns selected for three-night stands, and Camborne, Bodmin, Falmouth, Penzance and St. Austell (two nights) followed while Wadebridge and Liskeard were visited for one night. All towns were revisited

hours a day, for at least six days a week, and no stage-hands are employed, the entire work of setting stages, packing, and driving the transport are undertaken by the actors themselves.

J. Boyd Brent, actor and director, is also producer of some of the plays in which he does not himself appear. Stage-management duties are shared between actors Piers Plowman, Ronald Sly, Hedley Lunn, and stage director Cecil Davies. The care

of the excellent wardrobe is divided between actresses Greta Newall, Bettina Stern, Eveda Attwood, and Valerie Grey. Eveda Attwood also has to her credit the splendid production of *Arms and the Man* at present in the repertory. Valerie Grey, so enchantingly feminine as Louka in *Arms*, has also proved her worth as a competent assistant electrician. The administration of the company is well cared for by Molly Sole, general secretary, and D. J. Hamilton Moore, business manager.

Considering the extreme difficulty under which the company often has to work, it seems impossible that real technical excellence could be attained, and yet close observation of the performances proves this to be the rule rather than the exception. With no space to review each play in detail, it is hardly fair to single out individual performances for praise, but some are so outstanding as to demand mention. A quick glance over the season's programmes at once calls to mind a series of jewels that must long be treasured in the playgoer's memory. Greta Newall, a vivid presence in all her roles, was outstandingly lovely in *Shadow and Substance*. J. Boyd Brent, an amazingly versatile artist, achieved distinction in four widely differing parts: Pastor Manders, Sergius, Peter Stockmann, and the Soldier in *The Unknown Warrior*. Bernard Rumball, another young actor with a wide range, was perhaps most notable as *Mr. Bolfray*, and as the Canon in *Shadow and Substance*. Eveda Attwood gained her greatest success as Petra, while Valerie Grey contrasted her Louka with a crop-haired and clumping little boy in *Enemy of the People*. Tom Cunningham was brilliant as O'Flingsley in *Shadow and Substance*, and Seumas M. Stewart was armed with a really authentic Scottish accent as MacCrimmon in *Mr. Bolfray*. Piers Plowman was also excellent in the latter play as Cully. Ronald Sly, nineteen-years-old stage-manager, achieved a remarkable tour de force as Morten Kiil in *An Enemy of the People*, in which play John Headley also was at his best as Aslaksen. Hedley Lunn very good in this same play as Billing, did even better as Nicola in *Arms and the Man*. These few performances, chosen from random memory, by no means represent the sum total of fine work being done by the company, and very special mention should be made of Bettina Stern, a young actress who played Mrs. Alving with complete conviction and great charm.

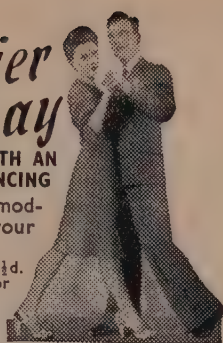
From Cornwall, the company has turned its attention to the Potteries area, the latest production in the repertoire being Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. A permanent home for the Adelphi Players is being sought for in this district, and theatregoers in this area may well look forward to great days when this project materialises.

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West End or Waterloo Road

By ROBERT MCKOWN

The recent opening of the Old Vic Theatre as the future home of the Old Vic Theatre School adds point to this article, though it will be some years before the complete restoration of the famous theatre can be undertaken.

IN September 1944, when the curtain rose on Tyrone Guthrie's production of *Peer Gynt*, many of us felt that a new and glorious chapter was opening in the history of the Old Vic. The company which had started in obscurity thirty years before and had slowly added both to its achievements and to its prestige, was at last stepping into the proud position of Britain's foremost theatrical company and it seemed particularly appropriate that the first person to speak when the curtain rose was an actress who had been one of the first of the obscure toilers in the Waterloo Road. It was the apotheosis of the Old Vic.

Everything that has happened since has confirmed us in our first opinion. But there is another school of thought — a school which regards the present series of triumphs as, at best, a temporary expedient pending a return to pre-war conditions and, at worst, a base betrayal of all that the Old Vic stands for. The slogan of this school is, "It wouldn't have done for Miss Baylis," and after a good deal of subdued murmuring the storm finally broke in the correspondence columns of the *Daily Telegraph*.

This correspondence started over the alleged high prices at the New Theatre. People cried out against the 13/6 stalls as if those were the only seats, although as Mr. Bronson Albery pointed out there is a 1/6 gallery and a 3/6 upper circle, both prices being below West End average. It might also have been pointed out that, as each production gets more performances than in the Waterloo Road days, the number of people who can see it at cheap prices is as great as ever. The "plutocrats" who can afford 13/6 or 9/6 are not robbing the old audience of its place in the theatre; they are supplementing that audience and incidentally providing the money without which we could not have the present high standards of production.

But the discussion in the *Daily Telegraph* showed very clearly that the real complaint is not of high prices but of the presence in the West End of a company formed by

Lilian Baylis in Lambeth. There seems to be an impression that the Old Vic was founded to give Shakespeare to a special public—the public that attended the pre-war productions—and that to give Shakespeare to any other public is to break away from the intentions of the founder.

In actual fact, of course, the Old Vic was not founded to produce plays at all. Emma Cons was a social reformer and a temperance advocate, not a one-woman Arts Council, and her Royal Victoria Coffee Music Hall was "not intended to provide for a higher class of audience than that which at present frequents music halls." It was Lilian Baylis herself who first departed from the intentions of the founder. While Emma Cons had given ballad concerts to a genuine Lambeth audience, her niece finished by giving Chekhov and Ibsen, as well as Shakespeare, to an audience which definitely did not come from the Waterloo Road whatever sentimentalists may like to think. (Professor Dent, in his book on the Old Vic, is quite emphatic about that).

The real Old Vic tradition is one of progress, not of stolid adherence to a single narrow purpose. The theatre has always been one step ahead of the public. In what has been called a "rough house" it gave ballads and coffee; to the ballad concert public it gave Shakespeare; to a Shakespeare public it gave Shaw and Ibsen. Now that these and other great dramatists have been accepted by the general playgoing public the Old Vic is offering *better* Shakespeare, Ibsen, etc., thus creating a critical public where there was formerly an uncritical one. An Old Vic production to-day is not just another revival of a well worn play but an outstanding event; of its first twelve productions at least seven have made theatrical history.

Now it is geographically possible for the company to return to the Waterloo Road in due course and continue there the work now being done in St. Martin's Lane. If that happens, all well and good. But some of us fear that a return to the old theatre

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would be accompanied by a return to lower standards of production. Even before the war the Old Vic made a loss; to-day it would be quite impossible to run the theatre at pre-war prices without a drastic lowering of artistic standards. It is an open secret that the actors at the New Theatre are making a financial sacrifice to work for the Old Vic; one could not decently ask them for even greater sacrifices.

The truth is that the Old Vic of 1914-1939 has done its work. Starting in the days when Shakespeare was still an actor-manager's stage-prop and Ibsen the sickly child of a few enthusiasts, it has slowly built up an audience for these and other great dramatists. It started as a lone and desperate venture; to-day the same work is being done by repertory theatres all over the country and for a far wider public than the original Old Vic could ever reach.

If the Old Vic returns to what it was when I first entered its doors twenty years ago—which is what the cry of "Back to Lillian Baylis!" amounts to — the theatre will just be one of many repertory theatres doing good but undistinguished work in a very restricted field. If, on the other hand, it progresses on its present lines it will soon become what it has nearly become already — a company of such high repute that to act in it, produce for it or design for it will be the highest honour to which a man or woman of the theatre can attain. It will set the standard for every other company in Britain—perhaps in the world.

As to *where* this work is done, the strength of the Old Vic was never in the bricks and mortar of the building but in the spirit of the company. That spirit shows no signs of having been quenched by its transfer to the West End and I for one never expected it to be. The sort of flame that was lit in the old theatre all those years ago will burn equally brightly and equally steadily in the Waterloo Road, the West End, Wimbledon, Walthamstow or Waltham Green.

Richmond Theatre

WINIFRED and Andrew Melville (co-directors with Frederick Piffard and Alan Miles), recently took over the lease of the Richmond Theatre, where their new company opened its season on February 17th with *Pygmalion*, which will be followed by *Frieda*, *Private Lives* and *The Years Between*. Winifred Melville is the leading lady. For nine years the Melvilles, who both come of famous theatrical families, have been directing at the Palace Theatre, Watford, where they have been staging straight plays and a yearly pantomime.

CORRECTION

We regret that by an oversight the price of Potter's Catarrh Pastilles, in their advertisement in our February issue, appeared as 1/12, instead of 1/3, the ruling price.

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Amateur Stage

AFTER some lapses during the war years,
a number of provincial drama festivals
are resuming. It will be remembered that
a number of coast or holiday resorts before
the war adopted the idea of organising
amateur drama festivals as an attraction.
The idea had its champions and critics—
it did appeal to many societies in the areas
concerned.

Blackpool's tenth annual drama festival
of one-act plays takes place in the week of
March 24th at the Grand Theatre, with a
syllabus of seven classes, two being res-
tricted to NODA members for drama and
comedy.

Lowestoft drama festival is fixed for
Whitsun week of May 26-31 at the Spar-
rows' Nest Theatre; with Mr. F. Sladen-
Smith as adjudicator. There are five
sections, with a trophy for each. Closing
date for entries is April 26th.

Othello in a public house is the task of
The Taverners, at St. Heliers Arms, Car-
shalton, on March 6th.

Appropos the February crisis, it may be
noted that *Black Magic*, the coal play spon-
sored by the Ministry of Fuel, after its
January production at Unity Theatre, is
now visiting provincial areas.

Ronald Hines, who played King John in
the Goodrich Players' February production
of *The Road to Runnymede*, a new histori-
cal play by Martin Holmes, has been
awarded a RADA scholarship.

Toynbee Hall's festival final is to be held
on March 22nd at 2.30 and 7 p.m., with
George Devine and Norman Marshall as
adjudicating critics. This is the eleventh
of a very popular series of festivals.

March 6th was the final date for the series
of lectures at the BDL Training Course at
the Practice Theatre. The speaker was M.
Michel Saint-Denis, on Obey's *Noah*, pro-
duced at the New Theatre in 1935.

Rose Theatre Club, Burnley, gave a
Jacobean production of *Macbeth* in
February, with costumes and settings
designed and made by the Club.

Derby's Old Centaurs' Theatre Group
have selected Priestley's *I Have Been Here
Before* for six nights from March 17th, and
Bax's *Rose Without A Thorn* for the week
of May 5th.

Westminster Bank DOS staged *This
Happy Breed* at the Scala for three nights
ending March 1st.

Operatic Societies should note that *The
Lilac Domino* is now available for amateurs,
Macdonald & Young controlling it.

As inquiries sometimes reach this journal
for any group interested in puppets, readers
may note that the Educational Puppetry
Association organises various events in this
field. The Hon. Gen. Secretary is Mr. J.
Vincent Chapman, Minett Lodge, Heath
Drive, Theydon Bois, Essex.

During the war of 1914-18, a section of the RAMC attached to 28th Division formed a theatre party for the entertainment of troops in Salonica. One of the plays produced was *Facing the Music*. After demobilisation these men conceived the idea that their friends at home would like to see their show, so an exact replica of the Salonica performance took place at Cripplegate with an all male cast, with undoubted success. After this happy beginning the Esmond Dramatic Club was formed with the help of lady friends. This Club rehearsed at St. Bride and played at Cripplegate until 1924, when the Institute manager, Mr. Berwick, suggested to Helen Henley, their secretary, that a Dramatic Section should be formed with performances in the Bath Hall. It was not an easy decision to make as the "Esmond" had obtained a very good reputation by now, and it meant changing the name to St. Bride. The fact that they would have their own theatre with permanent rehearsal and property rooms, which is a great asset to any club, turned the scale and all players became members of the Institute.

Three plays were produced each season with several private shows at hospitals, etc. A team entered annually in the BDL Festival, reaching the final once and semi-finals twice. Owing to the tireless energy provoked by their love of this splendid winter hobby, the Bath Hall shows were always filled to capacity. Until the outbreak of the last war, the secretaries were Helen Henley, Violet Poole, Kathleen Chubb and Reg Harrison. Helen Henley acted as business manager with Arthur Harris as treasurer right through. Splendid work was done by J. Neville Terry as stage manager. The sixtieth production, *The Housemaster*, by Ian Hay took place on March 25th 1939.

Once more, after a lapse during the war years, the curtain rose at St. Bride with a performance by the re-formed Company of *Quiet Week-end* on February 14th and 15th. Mr. E. Lovett Darby, business manager of The St. Bride Players, has many plans for the future, and would like to see eventually their own theatre and Theatre Club, situated in London. Their Secretary is Mrs. D. Harrison, 10 Alland Road, Willesden Green, NW2.

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Printed in Great Britain by THE LEWES PRESS (Wightman & Co., Ltd.), Friars Walk, Lewes, for the
Proprietors and Publishers, PRACTICAL PRESS, LTD., 1, Dorset Buildings, Salisbury Square, Fleet Street,
E.C.4. Editorial and Advertising Offices: 1, Dorset Bldgs., Salisbury Sq., Fleet St., E.C.4. Central 1555

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